



EM Recovery NEWS FLASH

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Progress Continues Post-Recovery Act Award at Hanford Site

RICHLAND, Wash. – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act work at the Hanford site continues with several projects intended to reduce the Cold War cleanup footprint, from decommissioning a plant once associated with plutonium production to demolition of the last remaining structure at a reserve that had served as a buffer area for the U.S. Army.

Workers with DOE contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M HILL) are accelerating the decommissioning of the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) by removing large pieces of contaminated equipment called gloveboxes, highly contaminated piping and asbestos. In November, crews began demolishing the six-building PFP vault complex. Built in 1971, the vault complex was the last stop for plutonium produced at Hanford. Inside gloveboxes, workers stabilized and packaged plutonium in metal canisters that were stored in the vaults until they were shipped

to other DOE sites for weapons production. The vault complex will be the final major support facility to be demolished at the PFP complex.

On the outer edge of the Hanford Site, workers plan to deactivate and demolish the 6652-L facility, which was formerly used for research within the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve. The facility remained occupied during fiscal year 2011, which spanned October 2010 through September 2011, to complete research activities, and is no longer needed. The reserve is part of the Hanford Reach National Monument, where CH2M HILL workers funded by the Recovery Act removed 24 facilities and hundreds of debris sites. That work reduced the cleanup footprint by 290 square miles.

In December 2011, crews demolished the 209-E Criticality Mass Laboratory, the former nuclear facility on Hanford's Central Plateau, the 75-square-mile center of the site. Decades ago, scientists used the facility to work with plutonium and uranium solutions. Preparing the laboratory for demolition was a nearly two-year process accomplished with Recovery Act funds that involved workers removing hazards from the building, including 11 highly radioactive horizontal tanks. Workers also demolished another facility along the Columbia River: the 190KW pump house, which once helped pump treated water to the K West Reactor for cooling. In all, CH2M HILL workers used Recovery Act funding to demolish more than 1.1 million square feet of facilities across the site.

“Cleaning out and demolishing these structures is a key element of DOE’s vision for completing several major cleanup projects by 2015. This work keeps us on track to meet a major regulatory milestone to demolish the Plutonium Finishing Plant complex by 2016.”

*J.D. Dowell,
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for the Central Plateau,
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Workers demolish the 209-E Criticality Mass Laboratory, a nuclear facility on Hanford's Central Plateau.



Recovery Act work at the Hanford site involves demolition of the 209-E Criticality Mass Laboratory, a building with concrete walls that are several feet thick.



Workers tear down one of the first buildings scheduled for demolition at the Plutonium Finishing Plant vault complex.



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